

## **Gustaaf Wijngaard (12 November 1897 – 18 August 1942)**

Gustaaf Wijngaard is born on 12 November 1897 in Meerssen to Louis Salomon Wijngaard and Anna Stern. Gustaaf's younger brother Salomon Louis dies before Gustaaf is born, at the age of four. Gustaaf has an older half-sister Emma (1886-1923) who was born in their father's former marriage with Regina Weiss (ca. 1857- 1886).<sup>1</sup> The Wijngaard family lives at the Kuileneindestreet no 24 in Meerssen. Gustaaf's son Lou remembers his father as an amiable man, with an eye for the needs of others.

As a young child, Gustaaf is sent to the Saint Hadelin boarding school in Visé, a small village in Belgium just across the Dutch border. As an adult, Gustaaf is a livestock trader by profession. In those days, many professions were only accessible to people with a certain religion. For example, in the Dutch province of Limburg -of which Maastricht is the provincial capital- jobs in the public sector were allocated to Catholics. Yet, Gustaaf's father-in-law arranges Gustaaf's appointment as a Dutch army commissioner, tasked to buy and sell livestock. In his spare time, Gustaaf regularly plays cards in a local pub with other Maastricht livestock traders and his friends Emile Wesly and Jacob Kaufman. He is also a religious man who makes his morning prayers every day, visits the Synagogue and strictly follows Jewish traditions. In 1934 he joins the board of the Maastricht Synagogue. Because of his socio-economic position, Gustaaf was probably considered a dignitary within the Maastricht community.



Gustaaf Wijngaard

### **Finding a spouse**

In order to prevent consanguineous marriages, a bride with the same religion is in those days commonly sought outside one's own community. That is why Gustaaf sets off for Rotterdam where he finds his Jewish bride Johanna Rosa Wolf (1898-1967). They marry on 11 December 1930, Gustaaf is then 33 years of age. Within two weeks after their marriage, Gustaaf and Rosa settle in Maastricht at the Professor Scholsstreet no 10<sup>2</sup> where their son Louis Daniël (Lou) is born on 18 September 1935. After six years, on 26 June 1937, the Wijngaard family moves to the Oranjeplein no 9 in Maastricht while letting their property at the Professor Scholsstreet. When in 1939 Gustaaf's father-in-law passes away, his mother-in-law Efina Wolf moves in with them.

### **Retaliatory arrest**

Shortly before 19 May 1942, the German military summon the Wijngaard family to leave their house at the Oranjeplein. The house is being expropriated. Hastily, they Wijngaards ask others to safekeep their personal belongings some of which were never retrieved after the war ended.<sup>3</sup> Aware of the emergency situation, the tenant of their house at the Professor Scholsstreet agrees to let the Wijngaard family spend the night from 19 – 20 May 1942 at the house. Early morning 20 May, Gustaaf

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<sup>1</sup> Meerssen civil registration.

<sup>2</sup> Personal card Gustaaf Wijngaard administered by the Maastricht municipality.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Lou Wijngaard dated 29 October 2019.

is arrested by the German *Sicherheitspolizei (SD)*<sup>4</sup> because unknown persons had stolen 'Forbidden for Jews' signs in the city parc. Lou recalls that, after his father's noisy arrest, his father had to step into an open truck that was loaded with other captives. Along with Gustaaf, nine other dignitaries from the local Jewish community, were arrested. Their arbitrary arrest is a reprisal measure. Three men are released because of their marriage to a non-Jew and replaced by three others. One of the



Gustaaf, Rosa and Lou, ca. 1936.

released men is the Polish Salomon Brünn who, later in time, will be living in the same dwelling as Gustaaf's wife Rosa and son Lou.

The arrest of this group of Jewish men raises some questions: Why was Gustaaf the *only* Synagogue board member that was arrested? If the SD would have arrested the entire board, they instantly would have had ten dignitaries arrested and need not to look for others. *Why* were these men arrested and *who* picked their names?

Gustaaf is imprisoned in the Third Franciscan Monastery at the Minderbroedersberg in Maastricht where Rosa is allowed to visit her husband once a week. After approx. five weeks, on 25 June 1942, he is transferred to the Dutch camp Amersfoort, where he arrives the same day. Some reports state that Gustaaf is then already suffering from a poor health. After three weeks, he is deported to Auschwitz where he arrives on 17 July 1942. Here he dies of an infection at the age of 44 on 18 August 1942.<sup>5</sup>

### Rosa, Efina and Lou go into hiding in Brussels

When the first group of Jews is sent from Maastricht to camp Westerbork on 25 August 1942, Rosa, Efina and Lou are not among the deported persons. Since 21 Augustus 1942, probably after being briefly housed at the Koning Clovisstreet no 49 in Maastricht,<sup>6</sup> they have found shelter at the Volksplein no 21.<sup>7</sup> Soon afterwards, Mr and Mrs Brünn move in with them. When by the end of March 1943, resistance fighter Mrs Elise Rosenberg (Netteke), urges them to go into hiding,<sup>8</sup> Rosa, Efina, Lou and the Brünn couple flee to Brussels, Belgium. It's a dangerous journey over rivers and roads. In the tram and train they don't sit next to each other in order not to stand out. In Brussels, seven years old Lou is separated from his mother and grandmother, and finds refuge in a boarding school where he is relatively safe using the identity of a former non-Jewish student. Upon the betrayal of the school students, Lou narrowly escapes Nazi capture. Ultimately, he is reunited with his mother and grandmother who hide in an apartment above a pub which is regularly visited by German soldiers.

<sup>4</sup> Regionaal Historisch Centrum Limburg (RHCL), archive 07.A17, inventory no. 51. Gustaaf's registration number is 509.

<sup>5</sup> Nationaal Archief, archive numbers 2.19.287, inv.nr. 431, 2.19.305, inv.nr. 84 en 2.19.297, inv.nr. 141.

<sup>6</sup> List drawn up on 10 July 1942 by employees of the Maastricht civil registration, implementing the Jewish Ordinance 6/1941.

<sup>7</sup> It is unclear how they knew that they could be accommodated at this address, where they were officially registered (RHCL archives).

<sup>8</sup> The names of Rosa, Efina, Lou and the Brünn couple are on a list of Jews who have departed. The list was drawn up on 12 April 1943 and mentions Volksplein 21 as their last known place of residence.

After the liberation, they return to their house at the Oranjeplein in Maastricht which meanwhile has been sold by a Nazi minded real estate agent to an equally Nazi minded Dutch family. Rosa has to buy back her own, though expropriated, house. Their house at the Professor Scholsstreet 10 has also been sold by a Nazi minded real estate agent named De Pauw.

After the war the Red Cross informs Rosa and Lou of Gustaaf's death. Throughout the war and until her death in 1957, Efina was of vital support to Rosa and Lou.

Our gratitude goes to Gustaaf's son Lou Wijngaard and Armand Houben for their valuable contribution to this biography.



Efina Wolf, ca. 84 years of age.

Lengte	175 cm	17	Feb	1942
Haar	grijs			
Wenkbrauwen	grijs			
Voorhoofd	recht			
Oogen	grijs			
Neus	grijs			
Mond	grijs			
Kin	grijs			
Baard				
Aangezicht	grijs			
Kleur	grijs			
Gew. taal	Ned. P. B.			
Bijzondere teekenen				
Handtekening				

Gustaaf's release signature from Maastricht prison in 1942.